



Frank Kinney Park

WORKSHOP #1 MEETING REPORT November 21, 2002

Workshop time: 7:00 to 9:00pm

Workshop location: Parker Elementary School cafeteria, 3875 Kincaid, Eugene

Workshop facilitator: Robin Hostick

Other elected officials and City staff present:: none

BACKGROUND

City of Eugene Parks Planning staff hosted the first of two or three neighborhood workshops to discuss upcoming improvements to Frank Kinney Park. Improvements to the park are funded by the Parks and Open Space bond measure passed in 1998 by area residents. The workshop included a brief presentation on the project, the process, and the context of the park. This was followed by a general, informal discussion of issues and ideas relating to park improvements. Goals for the evening included 1) providing information to the neighborhood, and; 2) gathering ideas for a new park development plan. Turnout was low, with only 5 neighbors the workshop.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement for workshop #1 included the following:

- A postcard invitation was mailed on November 12 to about 830 southeast Eugene-area residents within approximately 1/2 mile of the park
- Personal postcard invitations were mailed to around 50 other interested parties and stakeholders, including neighborhood leaders
- An article on the event was included in the November 14 issue of the Council Newsletter
- A news release was distributed on November 15
- The workshop was included on the City Manager's Office public meetings calendar
- The workshop was included on the Parks and Open Space online schedule of events
- The workshop was announced in the City/Region section of the Register Guard preceding the event

PRESENTATION

Meeting participants convened at the Parker Elementary School cafeteria. A brief introduction was given to the Parks and Open Space Plan and the role of Parks Planning in the development of POS projects over the next few years. Reference was made to other acquisitions and projects in

or near the southeast Eugene area. Major outcomes for the meeting were listed as 1) the sharing of information about the project with neighbors; and 2) generating neighborhood-specific ideas for park improvements.

The planning process was outlined briefly. The schedule was given for park construction in the spring and summer of 2004. The existing park site was reviewed in detail, including a description of major elements such as circulation, existing trees, etc. In general, it was explained that the site is dominated by natural stream channels of the Amazon and a tributary (dry channel), as well as several open fields. The fields are dominated by non-native grasses and are mowed 3x/year, however, several large areas contain strong populations of native herbaceous plants (including wildflowers such as camas and wyethia). These areas are currently mowed 1x/year to allow re-seeding and seed collection of the native plants. The Amazon jogging trail (Rexius trail) makes a loop through the park that represents the southernmost extent of trail.

Proposed stormwater projects were outlined briefly, including the Martin Street pipe rehab, the Amazon channel rehab and the potential opening of the dry channel. The potential for tree loss associated with the opening of the dry channel was highlighted, but that the project needed further study to weigh the benefits and impacts.

Basic elements of a neighborhood park were outlined, including overall policies around development level of various park types (neighborhood, community and metropolitan).

DISCUSSION

With such a small group, an informal and productive discussion was held around issues and ideas for the park. All participants had an opportunity to share ideas and comments. Participants were asked to list issues, concerns, ideas, preferences, etc. for improvements to the park. A list is provided following this summary for a more detailed report of participant comments.

The participant group was clearly unified behind the idea that the park design should remain in as natural a state as possible. Active recreation such as ball fields, off-leash dog parks and skateparks were clearly out of the question for all of the participants (elements which are also not deemed compatible with neighborhood parks from a policy standpoint). The participants, however, also expressed strong reservations about creating a children's playground, which is a key component of most neighborhood parks. Since the 5 participants live next to or very near the park, reasons for this opposition revolved mostly around maintaining a quiet setting and avoiding doing anything that would attract more people or activity to the park. They posed that a nearby playground at Fox Hollow school is adequately serving this need in the neighborhood, and that a playground in the park would be unnecessary. The above-mentioned playground is owned and maintained by the school district, and is typically accessed from the east through private property (owners are under no obligation to be maintained for public use).

Preferred uses for the park were limited to passive activities such as walking, dog-walking, nature enjoyment, etc. The participants were not in favor of any other improvements that would support other uses or otherwise alter the natural state of the park, including the addition of any paved surfaces. Regarding accessibility, it was pointed out that there is currently no disabled access to the natural resources enjoyed by the participants, and that some accessible surfaces would be

needed if this criteria were to be met in the park.

Participants noted that the stream channels tend to divide the park and make crossing from one side to the other difficult. Evidence on site suggests that there are three main points of crossing through the stream channels. Most of these informal crossings are only possible at low water and are causing some degree of erosion and habitat degradation. It was suggested that a bridge would help direct traffic to a safe, all-season crossing that may also protect the stream channel and habitat. It was strongly suggested that the bridge be pedestrian scale and aesthetically compatible with the natural surroundings.

Some suggestions were made to provide a point of communication between neighbors in the park, such as a message board or kiosk. When asked if this was a reflection of a need for a neighborhood meeting space in the park, other participants expressed concern that a meeting space might attract attention from outside the neighborhood and lead to negative uses. Most participants seemed to feel comfortable with the idea of providing benches here and there in the park, as well as trash receptacles, although the same concern was raised about negative use.

One participant explained that the best way to insure against negative use patterns in a park (or any public space) is for the legitimate users to maintain a presence there. Positive and legitimate activity leaves no room for negative uses that tend to fill in a “void” of unused or unnoticed space.

There seemed to be general concurrence around the idea of providing native trees and shrubs in the park, including street trees to help frame the open space and minimize the visual impact of abutting fences and homes. Participants also appeared to support the idea of enhancements to existing natural areas, in particular stream channels and native prairie. Strong concerns were raised about fire safety from neighbors abutting the park, even in light of required fire breaks.

The following is a general list of comments and ideas presented by participants during the workshop.

ISSUES

General

- Leave as is! Maybe spend money somewhere else.
- Develop minimally
- Develop to preserve natural environment
- Sensitive! Minimal impact!
- Park must be maintained!

Use Patterns

- Sometimes trash and bottles left in park
- Midnight “joggers” linger in park at all hours
- Development might attract negative use
- Cruising around loop during summer
- Preserve peace! Keep natural, leave out artificial. Don't spoil w/development

IDEAS

Facilities/Design

- Community board
- Stretching station
- Meeting place? (Robin's question)
- Bridge? Should be artistic.
- Trash receptacles
- Benches here and there - consider locations near lamp posts to reduce likelihood of negative use
- Disabled accessibility - provide
- Education / interpretation - mixed feelings about this; should be informal; should increase awareness of valuable resources such as Amazon
- Habitat improvement and restoration

FINDINGS

The low response, in addition to the demographics of the respondents (adjacent park residents), suggests that another round of neighborhood-wide needs assessment is needed to increase confidence that a representative opinion is heard. Based on feedback thus far it is clear that there is a strong opinion in favor of little or no improvements in the park. It is recommended that a range of low- and minimal-impact design options be posted to all service area residents prior to a second workshop. Design options should emphasize preservation and enhancement of natural features, provide for and support passive recreation uses, and provide clear, safe and accessible pedestrian access through the park (east-west).

CLOSING

Participants were reminded that there will be at least one more public meeting for Frank Kinney Park sometime in early 2003, and were encouraged to watch the City/Region section of the newspaper as well as their mailbox for invitations to this event. It was explained that, at the next workshop, participants will be able to respond to a park design that will be created based upon discussions and priorities from today's event. Participants or other interested parties are welcome to discuss the project or submit comments at any time via phone, email or delivered mail.

ATTENDEES:

The following parties attended the workshop:

Stan Sweeten
Bev Sweeten
Susan Robertson
Deborah Noble
Ursula Lindqvist
Susan Truax

COMMENTS SHEETS

The following comments were recorded on comment sheets provided at the workshop and turned in to City staff at the end of the event.

Total comment sheets handed in at meeting: 3

Total comment sheets handed in following the meeting: 0

1. *In what ways do you think Frank Kinney Park can benefit you, your neighborhood, or your community?*
 - Keep as open space; foot bridge; have a waste can at different spots so these people don't leave their dog's waste in our trash cans
 - By retaining/preserving the natural environment of the park and surrounding area
 - I wish to see this space left very much "as is". It is a unique, natural calming space. This space provides aa chance to experience nature un-interfered with.
2. *What do you feel are some of the most important issues facing the park?*
 - Mowing for fire safety (very important)
 - Keeping it natural; maintaining the paths, cedar chip trails; adding trash cans (to encourage picking up dog poop)
 - How to maintain the minimalist feeling that exists now
3. *What existing features or aspects of the park site do you like most, or feel should be preserved?*
 - I like it the way it is; NO CHANGES!
 - Cedar chip trail; large open spaces; tall trees; sparse lighting (moonlight is nice!)
 - Open space; natural; no asphalt or concrete
4. *What do you think needs to be improved or changed most?*
 - If you are going to have a jogging trail then keep the whole thing up
 - NOTHING! Ok, habitat restoration
 - Nothing
5. *What are some of the activities and/or facilities you would like to see happen in the park?*
 - No dogs w/o the person holing a leash and walking them
 - Trash cans - emptied regularly!; perhaps nondescript benches under the lamp posts
 - No facilities; no specific activities other than creative, individual use as is occurring now (walking, jogging, dog walking)
6. *What other considerations are important for the success of this park?*
 - Keep the way it is
 - Surveying the community near the park about what residents want. Do not make assumptions based on demographic data
 - I believe the park is a success now! The old addage "if it's not broken, don't fix it" applies.

7. *Any other comments?*

- No changes
- Thanks for listening!
- I do feel positively about the sawdust on the trails, perhaps seed native flowers in the field, a few benches perhaps, garbage cans for dog waste. No off-street paved parking!